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ABSTRACT

Noting that an important trend in middle school reading instruction has been the increased use of literature and trade books, this paper suggests that using Caldecott Medal and Honor books in the middle school classroom is an effective way to expose students to high quality literature. The paper notes that promoting the use of such books also aids in developing an appreciation for art, art styles, and media used by illustrators. The paper then lists procedures for using Caldecott Medal and Honor books in the classroom and presents a list of 53 such books by topic (African-American stories, Native American stories, cultures around the world, concepts/lessons, and rhyming books). The paper also presents ideas for comparing and contrasting Caldecott books; a list of Caldecott books suitable for illustrator emulation; and brief descriptions of additional class activities based on such books. (RS)

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Using Caldecott Medal and Honor Books to Motivate Middle School Readers

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An important trend in middle school reading instruction has been the increased use of literature and trade books. Unfortunately, many teachers do not have a great deal of experience in implementing a literature-based program in their classrooms. Since this is a trend that is likely to continue, it is imperative that teachers at the middle school level have the necessary exposure to literature, as well as strategies and teaching methods for implementing the literature.

One such method involves the use of the Caldecott Medal and Honor books. As most teachers are aware, illustrations are a motivating factor for students when selecting a book. This interest in illustrations certainly continues as students reach middle school, but the opportunity for students to read and enjoy these types of books often does not. Because picture books are generally used in elementary classrooms, they are seldom used in middle school reading programs even though there are often many delayed or reluctant readers who would benefit from instruction using these books since many of these books are written on lower grade levels. If this unit is implemented at the beginning of the school year, it can be a positive way to interest reluctant readers and less able readers who do not feel as pressured to perform.

Promoting the use of Caldecott books also aids in developing an appreciation for art, art styles, and media used by illustrators. Recently published Caldecott books would particularly be of interest since many middle school students have probably not read a picture book since elementary school. Many middle school students enjoy drawing but are seldom given the opportunity. There are several activities that can be incorporated into this unit to tap into those talents such as illustrator emulation where students imitate an illustration using the same or a similar medium, illustrating their own Caldecott book, and comparing and contrasting older Caldecotts with more recent ones, or citing technological advances which affect changes in illustrations. Several Caldecott Medal and Honor books have been illustrated by the same person, which could serve as a study of a particular artist's style.

By choosing thirty or forty Caldecott Medal and Honor books, the

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teacher can provide for sustained periods of independent reading and allow students to engage in self-selection by choosing the Caldecotts they would like to read. Students can keep a log of the books they read for the purpose of summarizing, analyzing, and evaluating. The books can also be divided into cultures and concepts such as African-American Caldecotts or Caldecotts that teach a lesson and activities can be correlated to each category.

Using Caldecott Medal and Honor books in the middle school classroom is an effective way to expose students to high quality literature. It promotes critical thinking skills as well as independent reading and helps to foster an appreciation of literature through a positive learning experience.

Caldecott Book Log

The Caldecott Book Log is designed to help students remember what they have read and to allow them to critically analyze and evaluate the children's books that they read.

Procedures

- Select 30-40 Caldecott Medal and Honor books to use in the classroom.
- Students should be allowed to choose the books they want to read.
- Students should use the Caldecott Book Log form to assess the books they read.
- Log forms can be turned in for a grade, used to complete projects, and for students' own reflection.
- Teachers should assign the required number of books to be read based upon the amount of time they plan on teaching the unit and the reading level of the students. (Lower level students may not be able to read the same amount of books as more able readers in the same time period.)

Caldecott Medal and Honor Books

African-American Stories

Medal Books
Ashanti to Zulu
A Story, A Story
Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears
The Snowy Day

Honor Books
Anansi the Spider
Jambo Means Hello
Moja Means One
One Wide River to Cross
Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters
Tar Beach
The Talking Eggs

Native American Stories

Medal Books
Arrow to the Sun
The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses

Honor Books
Raven
The Desert is Theirs
Hawk, I'm Your Brother
In My Mother's House
The Way to Start a Day
When Clay Sings
Where the Buffaloes Begin

Cultures Around the World

Medal Books

Grandfather's Journey (Japan)
Mirette on the Highwire (France)
Lon Po Po (China)

Mei Lei (China)
The Funny Little Woman (Japan)
Baboushka and the Three Kings (Russia)
The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship (Russia)
Always Room for One More (Scotland)
Nine Days to Christmas (Mexico)
St. George and the Dragon (England)

Honor Books
The Boy of the Three Year Nap (Japan)
The Crow Boy (Japan)
Pepe the Lamplighter (Little Italy, USA)

Concepts/Lessons

Medal Books
Hey, Al!
Jumanji
Fables
Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears
Duffy and the Devil
One Fine Day
Once a Mouse
Chanticleer and the Fox
Where the Wild Things Are

Honor Books
Yo?Yes!
Andy and the Lion
The Treasure
Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters

Rhyming Books

Medal Books
Drummer Hoff
Madeline's Rescue
May I Bring A Friend?

Honor Books
The Judge
Journey Cake, Ho!
Madeline
Three Jovial Huntsmen

Compare/Contrast

Ideas for comparing and contrasting Caldecott books:

1. Books illustrated by the same person
2. Books written by the same person
3. Contrast two books in the same category (i.e. two concept books on friendship)
4. Books with animals
5. Books from the same country/culture
6. Old and new Caldecott books

The class can be divided into small groups and each group can be assigned a different compare/contrast activity. The attached form is helpful to students when using completing these activities.

Illustrator Emulation

The following Caldecott Medal and Honor books can be assigned to individual students or to small groups. Students should use a medium similar to the one used by the illustrator.

Title	Author	Illustrator	Suggested Medium
Jumanji	Chris Van Allsburg	Same	Charcoal pencil
The Snowy Day	Ezra Jack Keats	Same	Construction paper
Mei Lei	Thomas Hanforth	Same	Black marker/pen
Raven	Gerald McDermott	Same	Construction paper Black marker
Lon Po Po	Ed Young	Same	Water colors (red orange, black)
Working Cotton	Sherley Williams	Carole Byard	Water colors
Madeline's Rescue	Ludwig Bemelmans	Same	Black marker Yellow marker
Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears	Verna Aardema	Leo& Diane Dillon	Various colors of construction paper cut into shapes
Baboushka and the Three Kings	Ruth Robbins	Nicolas Sidjakov	Black marker, water colors, colcred chalk
Smoky Night	Eve Bunting	David Diaz	Various objects in book (cereal, plastic, etc.) pasted as a collage

Other Caldecott Activities/Suggestions

Elementary Activity Folders

-Each student is given a manila file folder. Construction paper is provided.
-Students are shown a sample folder and instructed to choose a Caldecott book from their log to make a folder of activities for a young child to complete after reading the book.
-Students decorate the folder.

Example: A Tree is Nice by Janice May Udry

-List all of the things you can think of that are made from trees.
-List all of the things that you can do with a tree. Draw your favorite tree activity. (Climbing, tire swing, etc.)
-Count the number of trees in your yard or on the playground at school.
-Alphabetize these types of trees. (Names of various trees are placed in a pocket in the folder.)
-List some of the foods we eat that grow on trees. Draw your favorite.
-The saying "Money doesn't grow on trees" means that money is hard to get. Write a story about what you would do if you woke up one morning and discovered a money tree growing in your yard!

Folders can be laminated and shared with elementary feeder schools.

Classroom Caldecott Books

-Allow students to work in groups to write and illustrate a children's story.
-Groups will submit books for a "Caldecott Medal" or "Honor Medal".
-A panel of teachers or the class can decide on the medal book and 2 or 3 honor books.

Caldecott Read-Aloud

-Students who are not inhibited by reading orally can earn extra credit by selecting their favorite Caldecott book and reading orally to the class.
-Those who prefer not to read in front of their peers can read a Caldecott book to a young child at home. The parent of the child can sign a form verifying that the student read the book to the child.

Caldecott Categories Activities

African-American Stories

1. From the books The Talking Eggs and Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters, compare Rose and Manyara and compare Blanch and Nyasha.

2. Color and label on a map of Africa the setting of each story.

3. Which of the books attempt to teach a lesson? List each and the lesson it teaches.

4. Compare and contrast the illustrations in Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears to those of Ashanti to Zulu, both illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon.

Native American Stories

1. Compare and contrast the illustrations in Raven and Arrow to the Sun.

2. In both of these tales, describe the elements that let the reader know that the story could not have really happpened.

3. Explain the style used to write the story, The Desert is Theirs. Why do you think the author chose to write in columns?

4. Students can be divided into small groups to research and present orally their findings on the various tribes mentioned in the books.

Cultures Around the World

1. Compare and contrast Lon Po Po with Little Red Riding Hood.

2. Compare and contrast the illustrations in Grandfather's Journey and The Boy of the Three Year Nap, both illustrated by Allen Say.

3. What do you learn about special holiday occasions in Mexico and China from Nine Days to Christmas and Mei Lei? Compare and contrast them to customs in the United States.